

Message Text

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SUBJECT: MAJOR EXPORT PROJECTS PROGRAM: ETHIOPIA: TELECOMMUNICATIONS

REF: ADDIS A-241, DEC 16, 1974

1. ATO GIRMEW INGADAYEHU, NEW ACTING GENERAL MANAGER OF THE BOARD OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS OF ETHIOPIA (BTE - FORMERLY IBTE, THEN TBE), HAS INFORMED US THAT THE TENDER FOR THE ETHIOPIAN COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE STATION WILL NOT BE LET AT THE END OF MAY/EARLY JUNE. A COMSAT REP (PAUL WINCHESTER) HAS BEEN WORKING WITH THE BTE ON SPECIFICATIONS DURING THE PAST WEEK AND IS EXPECTED RETURN TO WASHINGTON ON MARCH 15. COMSAT WILL FORWARD A CLEAN SET OF SPECIFICATIONS AT THE END OF THE MONTH AND WINCHESTER WILL RETURN TO HELP EVALUATE BIDS. ACCORDING TO ATO GIRMAW, BIDDERS WILL BE GIVEN A FULL THREE MONTHS FROM OPENING DATE AND BTE WILL TAKE AN ADDITIONAL THREE MONTHS TO EVALUATE BIDS BEFORE AWARDED TENDER. ON THE BASIS OF THE FOREGOING, THE TARGET FOR COMPLETION IS NOW EARLY 1977.

2. TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF MICROWAVE LINKS, ATO GIRMAW SAID THAT A JOINT TENDER FOR THE (A) TESSENEI/ASMARA, (B) DESSIE/ASSAB AND (C) SHASHAMANE/MOYALE LINKS WOULD BE

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ISSUED WITHIN THE NEXT FOUR WEEKS. THIS IS CONDIERABLY

EARLIER THAN PREVIOUSLY PLANNED (SEE REPAIR). BECAUSE OF DELAYS, THE ADDIS/SHASHAMANE LINK, SCHEDULED FOR EARLIER COMPLETION, IS NOW EXPECTED TO BECOME OPERATIONAL IN MAY.

3. ATO GIRMAW, WHO HAS BEEN HEAD OF THE BTE'S ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, EXPRESSED SOME DISAPPOINTMENT THAT VERY FEW AMERICAN FIRMS HAVE BEEN BIDDING ON BTE TENDERS. HE SAID THAT AS A GRADUATE OF PURDUE AND A FORMER EMPLOYEE OF STROMBERG-CARLSON, HE KNEW THAT AMERICAN MANUFACTURERS PRODUCED HIGH QUALITY EQUIPMENT AND, SINCE THE EXCHANGE REALIGNMENTS, AT COMPETITIVE PRICES. HE PARTICULARLY HOPED THAT US COMPANIES WOULD BID DIRECTLY AND NOT THROUGH THEIR EUROPEAN SUBSIDIARIES, WHOSE PRODUCTS DID NOT ALWAYS MATCH THE QUALITY OF THEIR PARENT COMPANIES.

4. COMMERCE MAY WISH TO BRING THE ABOVE TO THE ATTENTION OF POTENTIAL US EXPORTERS AND MANUFACTURERS.

5. DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT.

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